

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 SS-15 INR-07 /035 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9558

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1605

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, TP, GB

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: DRAFT COUNTRY ACTION PLANS FOR GABON  
AND SAO TOME

REF: (A) STATE 147379 (B) 148224

1. EMBASSY FINDS DRAFT COUNTRY ACTION PLAN FOR SAO TOME  
EXCELLENT STATEMENT OF SITUATION IN THE ISLANDS AND REALISTIC  
APPRAISAL OF U.S. INFLUENCE ON EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
IN THAT COUNTRY. THEREFORE, RECOMMEND IT BE SUBMITTED AS  
STANDS. GABON PLAN ON OTHER HAND NEEDS SOME SPECIFIC AD-  
JUSTMENTS AND A SHIFT IN FOCUS TO BETTER REFLECT HUMAN  
RIGHTS STATUS HERE.

2. WE SPECIFICALLY RECOMMEND FOLLOWING CHANGES IN  
REFTEL (A):

A) IN PARAGRAPH ON "ARBITRARY ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT"  
AT END OF LINE 6, AFTER WORDS "PRESIDENT BONGO HAS," INSERT  
"IN PAST." EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO RECENT EXAMPLES WHERE  
GABONESE CITIZENS HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO GENERAL CONFINEMENT  
OUTSIDE CAPITAL.

B) IN SAME PARAGRAPH LINE 12, FOLLOWING SENTENCE ENDING  
"FOR OPPOSITION ACTIVITY." ADD NEW CLAUSE TO NEXT SENTENCE  
"HOWEVER, EVEN THESE MILD MEASURES HAVE VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED  
AND". EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO INCIDENT IN PAST TWO YEARS OF  
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ARBITRARY ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT BY PRESIDENT BONGO.

C) IN PARAGRAPH NO 3, "TRENDS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
POLICY," IN LINE 9 CHANGE LAST WORD OF SENTENCE FROM "NO"  
TO "LITTLE." GOG HAS MADE EFFORTS IN PAST TO DEVELOP  
GABONESE AGRICULTURE.

D) UNDER NO. 4 "RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT" IN  
PARAGRAPH 2 ON LINES 5 AND 6, STRIKE CLAUSE "THE FORMATION

OF A SEPARATE AIR GABON." AIR GABON IS CONSIDERED LIKELY TO BE PROFITABLE OPERATION AND, THEREFORE, MAKES MORE ECONOMIC SENSE TO GOG THAN CONTINUED PRICIPATION IN AIR AFRIQUE.

E) IN SAE PARAGRAPH, ALSO STRIKE LAST CLAUSE OF LAST SENTENCE "ALTHOUGH IT BORDERS AT TIMES ON BLATANT CORRUPTION." CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION IS NOT SAME AS BLATANT CORRUPTION.

F) IN PARAGRAPH UNDER "REACTION IN THE HOST COUNTRY," CHANGE LAST SENTENCE TO READ "HOWEVER, THERE WAS A GENERAL AMNESTY AND TODAY NO PRISONERS REMAIN IN CUSTODY." IF DEPARTMENT HAS INFORMATION FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NAMING SPECIFIC POLITICAL PRISONERS, WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING IT SINCE WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL PERSONS ARRESTED IN 1972 HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED.

3. GENERAL TONE OF GABON DRAFT PLAN STRIKES EMBASSY AS TOO NEGATIVE FOR COUNTRY THAT IS BASICALLY LIBERAL, PROSPEROUS AND BY AFRICAN STANDARDS NOT TERRIBLY CORRUPT. GABON HAS VERY LITTLE HISTORY OF VIOLATION OF BASIC PERSONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND BONGO HAS, IF ANYTHING, IMPROVED ON HIS PREDECESSOR'S GOOHGWQCJUYNQQOWWLTLE TRUE THAT THERE IS CORRUPTION IN BONGO GOVERNMENT, PRACTICE IS NOT WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND RELATIVELY MINOR UOCGISFPKBUSTANDARDS. FINALLY BONGO DOES HAVE EXAGGERATED LIFE STYLE BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT  
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TO REMEMBER THAT ALL GABONESE HAVE RECEIVED IMPRESSIVE LIST OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS UNDER HIS GOVERNMENT. STUDENTS ARE SUBSIDIZED TO ATTEND SCHOOL FROM SECONDARY LEVEL THROUGH UNIVERSITY, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO UNEMPLOYMENT IN COUNTRY, AND EVERY CITIZEN HAS EXTENSIVE MEDICAL AND RETIREMENT COVERAGE UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY. IN VIEW OF ABOVE, BELIEVE DRAFT PLAN SHOULD BE ALTERED TO PRESENT MORE POSITIVE PICTURE THAN IT DOES AT PRESENT. STEIGMAN

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## Message Attributes

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